

SEASONS OF FAITH

SEASONS OF FAITH

Religious and Spiritual Poetry

Peter Menkin, Obl Cam OSB

Copyright © 2011 by Peter Menkin, Obl Cam OSB.

ISBN: Softcover 978-1-4628-8068-3

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the copyright owner.

Cover art, Photograph by The Reverend Doctor Sally Brower, Assistant Priest at St. Martin's Episcopal Church, Charlotte, North Carolina USA: taken in Italy. The shrine is in Barbischio Italy. It doesn't have a specific name beyond that.

"My art emerges from the intersection of the deepening of the personal spiritual life and participation in the communal life of faith. Through photography, I retrace the footsteps of Christian pilgrims and record the vestiges of their journeys, the shrines, altars, and thin places where they meet God. My art is both my spiritual practice and an invitation to others to awaken to the mystery of God, risk holy encounter, and cross the threshold of their heart's deep hopes."

e-Mail sbrowerphd@aol.com

This book was printed in the United States of America.

To order additional copies of this book, contact:

Xlibris Corporation

1-888-795-4274

www.Xlibris.com

Orders@Xlibris.com

76328

With thanks to Juliana Jensen and Charles L. Coleman III of Mill Valley,
California USA

Contents

Foreword	11
----------------	----

SUMMER

Vision of Light toward end of Day	15
Summertime talk in color and sound	16
“Talking to the Muse, Conversations with the Holy Spirit II” (Count Basie)	17
Reading Buddhist Thought	18
I Desire to See Good Days.....	19
On Retreat.....	20
Coffee, you flavor my life	24
Heaven talk, indivisible essence tangible, musical notes, language of peace, white light at tunnel’s end	27
Summer before last I saw an Angel	29
When I Prayed with Sisters of Mercy.....	30
Spiritual recognitions	31
Colored streamers move in the wind	32
Waiting engagement in contemplation: to Be/Ascend	33
California at August Rain.....	35

FALL

Fall is Here	39
I Desire to See Good Days.....	40

Apophatic Prayer: A Transcription41

Psychoanalytic experiences, inner spaces entered46

One word prayers47

“Poetic Recitation on the Rule of St. Benedict”48

All Souls.....49

Morning before Winter: Awakening with dawn.....51

WINTER

What darkness55

January 25, 201056

Seeker & Doubter57

Early morning.....58

Natural places with sacred quality59

Harmony of seasons turning towards Spring in February.....60

The Awakening Spirit61

Sleep, known and unknown petitions62

“Advent”63

“Advent Candle”64

Christmas as poem.....65

Visions of God’s presence.....66

SPRING

Holding the moments of creation’s good71

The journey of communion72

Ash Wednesday.....74

Unfolding in the silence and sound75

Compilation (for Lent)76

Engaged in Le Milieu Divin, Lent.....77

I Visited the Veteran’s Hospital Today, Oh Boy78

Ascension Day, No. 180

The winds of youth in Spring, they call81

Notes from the study house in March, No. 3.....82

In the flame of the candle unknowable vastness.....83

Conversation with Aged.....85

Simple joys . . . frail years87

Pentecost Sunday Prayer88

To know something about God89

Poetics On Easter90

Alleluia!! Easter!!.....93

Juliana Jensen, J.D., Harvard Law School, Editorial Consultant

Foreword

*There is quiet, no hard
sound—strong silence
of solitude and work.
This earthly strength
reveals heaven.
Christ's spirit
rests on this place.*

— IV. *Seeking the Lord* from *On Retreat* by Peter Menkin

It has been said that if Western Christianity conducts theology in prose, then Eastern Christianity theologizes in poetry. Whether the distinction holds upon closer scrutiny I leave to the more learned, but the axiomatic claim rightly reflects the Christian West's tendency to be wordy, technical, and legalistic. (We have in Western Christianity the proliferation of canon law, the dense tomes of the scholastics and systematics, and the ponderous processes of ecclesiastical polity together as a mere fraction of the evidence!) Poetry, on the other hand, offers us deep riches of meaning with a remarkable economy of words. This was an art of wisdom often chosen by the mystics of the West and popularized by the hymnodists. In this sense, poetry — and particularly Christian poetry — continues to offer a counterpoint to the dry, wordy explanation that often stupefies the human spirit more than it edifies. I am struck, as a preacher, to compare the theological content of say, one of my ten-minute sermons, with a twenty-second poem of Peter Menkin's. The contrast leads me to wonder if a brief poem rather than my usual sea of prose might prove more effective imparting a significant gospel message to busy, overly calendared lives crowded into our nave on a sleepy Sunday morning!

Peter's poetry offers a very old challenge to us in the twenty-first century, bombarded as we are by speech, images, and words in our noisy and often disconnected lives. It's a challenge not unlike that penned by some favorite Anglican poets across the ages. Take, for example, two classic giants such as John Donne and George Herbert, who reflected time and again on spirit,

heart, and place with mere handfuls of chosen words: words that still cut through the clutter of daily life and powerfully integrate our minds and spirits for a moment with God's, stretching and flexing our stony hearts into living, compassionate flesh again.

In these pages, I pray you will find what I have found: the blend of humor, personality, poignancy, spiritual reflection, and popular culture that makes Peter Menkin's poetry moving and distinctive. I pray you will also find Peter's colorful character — one that I have had the honor of serving alongside now for nearly five years. As a Benedictine Oblate, Peter has inwardly digested the profound importance of a sense of place and person and the stories that places and people hold. Their stories speak to ours if we will only look with open eyes and listen with tender hearts.

What I find most remarkable about Peter's poems is that they uncover a holiness of home that so many of our sisters and brothers travel far, long, and wide to find. It's this sense of holiness of place that informs Peter's ministry with the people of this parish and the wider community nestled in this valley; it's a gift that appears in his in-depth reporting as a religious correspondent; and it's a gift reflected in his poetry, where a sunset or a jazz album can surprisingly reveal the oldest story of all: a love that birthed a universe and is even now laboring in its expanding and unfolding, in cosmic remaking and redemption. It was this old story that was revealed to us by an unlikely Jewish carpenter in a faraway land — His story that shattered worlds through an ignominious death and a startling rising up to new life. Having drawn closer to us now than even our breath, Christ invites us into this holy, divine labor in the Spirit. Peter responds to this invitation with prayer, sacrament, service . . . and poetry.

This volume captures the rhythm of that holy work, weaving together the content of our earthly lives with a divine agenda of salvation unfolding blessing for us, season by season, in a pattern that leads our mortal fragility towards eternity.

The Rev. Richard E. Helmer, p/BSG

Eastertide 2011
Church of Our Saviour
Mill Valley, California

Summer

Summer

1. Vision of Light toward end of Day.....	15
2. Summertime talk in color and sound . . .	16
3. “Talking to the Muse, Conversations with the Holy Spirit II” (Count Basie)	17
4. Reading Buddhist Thought . . .	18
5. I Desire to See Good Days	19
6. On Retreat.....	20
7. Coffee, you flavor my life	24
8. Heaven talk, indivisible essence tangible, musical notes, language of peace, white light at tunnel’s end	27
9. Summer before last I saw an Angel . . .	29
10. When I Prayed with Sisters of Mercy.....	30
11. Spiritual recognitions.....	31
12. Colored streamers move in the wind.....	32
13. Waiting engagement in contemplation: to Be/Ascend . . .	33
14. California at August Rain.....	35

Vision of Light toward end of Day



The light towards end of day at Fort Cronkite
Beach, moving to the evening as dusk arrived this summer day.

Visions this week: the sky—looking down the road,
As in the distance traveling south towards San Francisco
Beautiful hills, again the light as dusk arrived . . . summertime

With an empty mind, not blank, but quieted, so quiet, enjoying
The latter part of day, the vision of peace. This refrain began,

If briefly: May the Lord bless us. May the Lord shine upon us.
May the Lord grant us peace.

Visions of peace, a good vision, like mercy it comes from time
To time as I age into my 60s. I am glad for these moments,
And in the snatches of time here and there, while waiting,
Or visiting, I find the vision again. The goodness of creation
Noted in a vision of the end of day. Quietude.



Summertime talk in color and sound . . .

Speaking words that come out color,
visible
as in round circle of blue
like the clear Caribbean sea
this
summertime conversation
spoken against the clouded sky;
words about our lives
held together by sunset,
light
changing the green trees
ours
tall challenge at day's end
during friendly conversations
dimensions
radiant orange enlarging
between a man and woman.
To blend with the white sky
we speak admitting mortality.



**“Talking to the Muse, Conversations
with the Holy Spirit II” (Count Basie)**



My muse interrupted the reverie
this June day with the tune, “Pennies from Heaven”
awakening syncopating glee. Count Basie.

Decca Jazz.

We live on this food: along the path
I find myself fed by You.
It is a manna the Lord offers: a suitable meal—
traveling to liberty of soul in Triune God.

Manifold graces.

Piano plays, ratta-tat-honky-tonk swing,
refrain introduce jumpin’ yes riddly-dit.
The horn blows responding,
like Priests out of 2 Chronicles. Swing it.

Dance music to Honeysuckle Rose
some hymn to intro “Every time it rains it rains pennies from heaven . . .
you’ll find your fortune
falling all over town.”



Reading Buddhist Thought . . .

The present is a place,
 so I read. Buddhist thought
 tells me, between the past and the future
 is the place present. Be mindful;
 keep good thoughts
 —not so easy a thing.
 Spiritual teachers like
 Thich Nhat Hanh offer
 reverence.
 “Learn lessons from the cloud.”

“Tomorrow I’ll be gone . . .”
 he says, so I read.
 Me, too.
 Between he and I,
 through the pages
 there is his voice.

We wonder about faith.
 Is there something
 for the Christian in this Buddhist
 thought?
 In Church, the Priest
 washes his hands before
 celebrating. The Buddhist
 says clean hands to gain
 the truth.

A little style of his words,
 adapted to life
 as I know it. The man in the book
 is generous. Peace.



I Desire to See Good Days



The sunlight, the hallowed
event of everyday living.
Reminder of Christ
around us, before us, above us.
Peace, I seek the Lord's love.
Set out on this
to see him
who calls.



On Retreat



I: Preparation

Attend with the ear of your heart
Listen in the silence
at night or daytime
through trials and living.

This Rule brings God, the Lord
closer. Labor of obedience:
Before beginning a good
work, pray earnestly.

We are the Lords counted
sons and daughters.
The path offers good gifts,
open your eyes to the light.
Arise from sleep.
The Rule offers the voice
from heaven this day.

II. Prayer of request and confession

So much strife, the world
encroaches and wearies
with wearing. Stains.

Run on with life's light;
I seek this lightness
of being
that darkness and death
not overtake me.

The uncommon call, hear
his voice—
do not harden your heart.
Mercy that gives and opens,
says receive these words, so offered.

Learn the fear of the Lord
in everyday living—
even a moment in time.

Day star Benedict,
man of God speaking
across
centuries in holy words:

For a man or woman
in day's journey; arise
my soul and spirit to
join this way.

III. Place of retreat begins its Work

Quiet sounds of the house
reflect the Spirit resting
upon this place:

The birds talk of here, hear them outside. Yet the quiet
envelops with support
sinking to the bone.
Peaceful quiet, peaceful sounds.

Drench me arena,
a sanctuary amid
urban sounds: jet overhead,
passing car all these present
yet distant.

The tension of retreat:
subtle, strong, weak, resilient.
I rest, await renewal again.

IV. Seeking the Lord

There is quiet, no hard
sound—strong silence
of solitude and work.
This earthly strength
reveals heaven.
Christ's spirit
rests on this place.

V. Waiting on the Spirit

Inner life jangles, twitches,
aware of soothing Spirit.
Waiting.
Grace that underlines
living.
Ask for waters
that spring from abundance.
Quenches.

VI. Faith in God begins

Our meditation moves
to contemplation: today
let it be unto me;
so Morning Prayer starts.

I ponder my desire
for release from earthly pain,
find out about flesh again,
discovering the Spirit
holds other fruits: Wait
on the Lord.

Can one know, glimpse—
the great yes
of vastness greater
than mountains and hills.
Creation, all being.

Spark, star
burning bright,
the soul groans.

B'

Coffee, you flavor my life



With the cup of coffee
I am friends; usually we
meet with me the partaker
of this tasty liquid dark.

I think of you, coffee,
once beans, picked
in South America,
arriving
here to be ground right. You

fill the cup and saucer,
and stirring you is pleasure,
since I always intend first
sipping. This in remembrance
of my father, who said
I love coffee. He believed in hope. My wife, she

may by now have changed her tastes,
but when we were married in our
twenties she drank coffee

in the morning. Women like you
coffee, for I've known some
others who entertain your aromas

enjoying the heat like me
that you are when sipped, drunk
and go down the throat
giving taste buds a lasting
envelopment. Engage my mouth.

I remember her words: "Tug boat
coming 'round the bend!"
She went to a place
called St. John's Episcopal
where she learned to want peace.

There was one woman
I wanted to marry very
much, and she drank you
when we went all over the place:
coffee in a swank hotel, cool
hangout restaurants, petite
Ma-Ma's exclusive lunch spot
on Maiden Lane San Francisco,
and regular coffee shop, too—tasty word
is what my family thought
of my desires to drink you

with her. Too bad she ran
away to another when South
of Houston in New York City.
She learned in Temple
about Hebrew and God is good.

Sparks drank it, you coffee
good in the morning at the wood
round table in her San Francisco
apartment, kitchen table simple.

Marry me, but not so.
My friend went away, she
a lover of jazz, God,
the morning, and Quaker life.

What funny combinations have come
my way, with you coffee. She
is gone. Sadly I miss her
announcements, punctuated with:
“Oh, my God!”
She learned about loving
and sharing, with laughter.

Tonight I will remember,
there is life before coffee.
Hear my prayer.

B'

**Heaven talk, indivisible essence tangible, musical notes,
language of peace, white light at tunnel's end**



That old and evil death, thy sting,
comes to the conversation
with my friend, 85 years
who as a woman is widow,
and of sorrows. Living longer

on medicine and strength
of will, the ones nearing
the end of life are her companions.
Hold my hand, let us speak.

So the talk turns to life
after death: heavenward heaven.

The trumpets play all the time,
angels sing and worship God
in a court of ecstasy where
the conscious mind is aware
of our soul basking in glory
like a single star among infinite
galaxies, a sun ever burning hymn,
pure illumination this constant
harmony. Our tears are wiped
away and we weep no more, nor

travail or labor having run
the race of life in preparation
for infinite engaging love,
serene magnitude ever. Uncountable
the sum of young promise uplifted
to soar—in ascension to unity,

Summer

knowing the unknowable with
indivisible essence tangible.
This is heaven's way, do you think,
tell me of passing over to God.
We talk some more, she wanting to
come forward to the sacraments again.

Musical notes, language of peace:

This love a comfort, a white
light drawing us to embraces.
Place of rest, quiet, You
set a table before me Lord,
though I walk through the
shadow of death I fear
no evil. Comfort me, comfort me.

Walk with me in this valley,
she asks. I do, I will, I say.
Grateful. Grateful. Grateful.

B'

Summer before last I saw an Angel . . .



Way out West where cowboys
and Indians live (they live in villages, native), two summers
ago there was an angel
at the gasoline pump—Chevron Station. (Greenbrae, CA).
He looked like a man; there
are many men, but few angels

encountered at the Chevron, even in summer
the year before regular gasoline prices jumped.
Some like it here, these angels; tell
you these tall creatures as from

early Biblical story times. These are those among us.
Look for them now and then. Portents of friendly,
I hope, visitors walking among us
and driving both General Motors and foreign made
automobiles, filling the tank at the Chevron in summer daylight.

Are you a believer in angels, tall
or like many that these are travelers
come among us to stand and wait, enjoying
us humankind who are really animals of earthly birth.
I wonder.



When I Prayed with Sisters of Mercy



Usually,
one waits when
there is a coffin
in the church.

I have cried. Her
mother was dead
and though not mine,
nor my Church, prayer
was what I needed.

Her mother must
have been a devout
woman, I thought,
though my companion
with whom I'd arrived
was not. In the
Spirit
I got to my
knees.
Sisters of Charity,
too, were praying.

I think that
this helped, their
gracious simplicity
that night time
in the city
at a
neighborhood church.



Spiritual recognitions



You were there, and I knew you tangible
from love and desire, recollected:
the fine mind, and education,
the religion and spiritual teachings
held privately with modesty
in respect for reverent teachers.
Your prayers were those I listen
to as you offer mention to God
for the women of the Church.
Jesuit minds have instilled in you,
stranger known to me in the bread and wine,
the willingness to wear a silver
cross. More beautiful because you
express pain and love for the world
in its excess, of so much evil. Forgive
me I had to notice you in communion,
in archetype as woman seeking the divine
on the mountain in winter by the Pacific
Ocean: Vistas of rock, Route 1, Big Sur
Edge of the world, of the awe consistent:
We are at the place of prayer tangible
Christological; an immensity of the burning fire
with white in Trinity, mysterium.
New Ecumenical spirits sweep the world.
So generous a meal; we partake through
the day wrestling meditation,
and prayer to witness and speak. Ever flowing.
You came for strength and wisdom, ignited.
All of us were brought closer to God together.



Colored streamers move in the wind

The upon came incessant, gentle as breeze, light,
 waving banners narrow,
 these colored streamers

fanned the man of God
 during the light resting
 upon worshippers who through
 hymn song, prayer lips kissing

with raised arms uplifted,
 expectations of goodness
 acknowledged as a greeting
 to Sunday. Cross of giving

love does accede to ascetic
 requests when presented
 before an urban multitude.
 So his did so with humble

acceptance of divine will,
 wounded in love to so join
 the dance the spirit brought
 upon the souls assembled.



Waiting engagement in contemplation: to Be/Ascend . . .



The existential aloneness, yearning
enters as a musical cry, like a procession
the music flows through the building.
I join this human allowance in the finitude.

In retrospect, memory brings days enjoyed,
like the heart seeking. Beautiful sound.

The hearing of the listening ear
enjoins the great spirits [heavenly praise] who gather

in bringing more clearly a presence:
everlasting peace in a depth of I am, stays.
What elicited this to mind was sound.
This more than exercise as a movement

in music is recollected from the Cathedral,
where the players invoked a sense of Christ,
done by the Hilliard Ensemble—
music that speaks spare words:

A saxophonist met a vocal quartet.
Listen to this unusual sound.
What they play brings consideration . . . in the morning,

in the loneliness, at night.
How the music waits upon us for engagement
Self-emptying love given to respond. Allow

Summer

your love to come enjoining us to know:

“A blown husk that is finished

but the light sings eternal

a pale flare over marshes

where the salt hay whispers to tide’s change.”

I am.

B'

California at August Rain



August rain—summer
relieved—
cools the months.

Against the larger
sky, below walking
the path alone: common stranger afoot.

California scene,
vision existential, transitory.

Many roads cross the land,
hear the sound of the long highway
as the travelers go north: The light rain
waters with relief stark realities finite.

A mortal vision at the light
Of end of day, sighted
before the season changes.
This scene told anew, loneliness,

California climate norm.
Come the time of year
punctuated weather portents
Of the people going. Restless
And on the move.



Fall

Fall

1.	Fall is Here	39
2.	I Desire to See Good Days	40
3.	Apophatic Prayer: A Transcription	41
4.	Psychoanalytic experiences, inner spaces entered.....	46
5.	One word prayers	47
6.	“Poetic Recitation on the Rule of St. Benedict”	48
7.	All Souls.....	49
8.	Morning before Winter: Awakening with dawn.....	51

Fall is Here



breakfast
good morning

sunrise
wash bowl and spoon

anticipation
morning prayer.





I Desire to See Good Days



The sunlight, the hallowed
event of everyday living.
Reminder of Christ
around us, before us, above us.
Peace, I seek the Lord's love.
Set out on this
to see him
who calls.



Apophatic Prayer: A Transcription



Invited by God into
a wordless kind
of prayer—Cataphatic is opening
the Bible
and believing
the images of entering
into the wonder of the scene.

The same one invites us
into the apophatic spirituality.

Desert, stripping, pain, addiction.
loneliness. (Aloneness.)

Desert spirituality will be deeper,
and this is one.
Invitation to an all
new spirituality. This is the

monk's.
Birth at forty.
Forty to eighty.
Eighty to one-hundred twenty.

Moses was offering deliverance. (Acts.)
Settles into what is
the symbolic period
of 40 years ~into the future.

After 40 years he was learned to,
as a child,
look at this strange sight,
“Why the bush is not burning.”

Look hard in the desert
at 80 years of age of age.
This is a life as a child.
In the Hebrew: ~ I must go across and look.

This is a leaving of where
he was on a life
with the sheep
and have a look
at something
new.

He must leave this security
of the plain to be
confronted with the mystery.

How far the Lord wanted Abraham
to go as did Peter
in his early morning
as he waited for Christ. As did

Martha when she organized Christ,
or the Spirit.
Martha learns
something when Lazarus
dies.

God knows when we are
in the desert when he calls
in the desert when he calls,
“Where is Moses.”

It is in the Holy Fire
of God
when we take off our shoes,
as did Moses.
We do it
alone,
in solitude.

The very thing is the presence
of God
waiting for us.

I have heard the suffering
of my people. (Father Michael.)

God liberates Moses,
who in his
brokenness discovers his identity,
and in his ~finds his mission.

Contemplation (from male spirituality): trust
in the insecurity of the painful
victory by putting on the mind
of Christ. "Mercy."
reads an Oblate, "instead of sacrifice."
"went to the desert."
Moses meets God
in the inner Desert
and leads those in slavery
outside.

There are two deserts:
The invitation, the inside us
that is the other/Merton calls this
the great self within that is
the God within us. (The ineffable
now of truth.) Entailing
the creator,

we are in failure invited
into another truth,
the abandonment into the word.
For the Oblate (for me),
getting up early,

God very seldom comes as a
gentle invitation.
It comes as an assault on our invitation.

The Gospel only
makes sense
to the poor,
(the weakness of the poverty
of our humanity.)

We are
all struggling with the ideal
of our body, of a woman
and of a man.

The Little Book notates
poverty of spirit—a Little Book:
New look at spirituality,
new look at being human,
new look at who God is.

The Little Book notates entering into
the dying and stripping
—stripped with everything and just being
left with the now.
A cup of wine becomes sacred.
A desert allows us

to find a meaning (a place)
in the sacred.
Cup of wine

a desert allows
burning bush
yes.
'This flow is within us
and other people. There
is surrender here.
'There is surrender there.

Without doing,
and not going against
the nature of things
we have to go
where we are fed by Christ.
God takes Moses
into the heart of God.

(Words & thoughts by Father Michael, OSB Cam;
poem & transcription by Peter Menkin Obl Cam OSB.)

Psychoanalytic experiences, inner spaces entered



The binding force friendship
brings to tensions offers
resiliency in the face
apparent and seeks the mask

for interpretation during
deep analysis within the room
between two engaging psychoanalytic
concerns. Dialogues of inner

places encourage healing archetypes
deep within the autonomic brain
rising connections to frontal areas
with surgical precisions and general
practices the doctor's craft elicits.

Deftly within painful hurts, hidden
disguises of psyches desires,
experiences known, and associations
releasing avenues to share among
others a healing commonality
that is more than one. So many
Come into the room and out again.



One word prayers . . .



One word prayers were what I practiced
on the drive home, trying on the way
to see in the night towards San Francisco
where a purple glow in the sky distinguished
the unseen cityscape, and to the south,
metal towers lit with red warning lights, for airplanes
to note in the darkness. I was told by a teacher,
short prayers are good while

travelling. On the way, the Church prays
as it goes and its members do so also. Surprise,

interruption there is peace in the evening;
as a seeker of God, lover of Christ,
I know the distracting onslaught
of inner conversation—
ancient enemies that wait
in the darkness of the hour in one's mind,
like the crocodile brain deep inside. Accept
the suffering, and live to God's presence:
my short prayer is "Abba," I cry.



“Poetic Recitation on the Rule of St. Benedict”



Attend with the ear of your heart
Listen in the silence
at night or daytime
through trials and living.
This Rule brings God, the Lord
closer: do so to me.
Labor of obedience
Before beginning a good work, pray earnestly,
We are the Lord's counted
sons and daughters.
The path offers good gifts,
open your eyes to the light.
Arise from sleep.
The Rule proffers the voice
from heaven this day.



All Souls



Mary was a lovely girl, serene; so given to an open heart,
Friend of God like Abraham, seminal archetype welcoming

The Holy Ghost. What comes here November time? Pentecost
Days of spirits and united souls, saints in heaven and memories
Of the dead, where sorrow and pain are no more.
Mystical Holy Ghost.

Steadfast, mystical body of thy son, what is the light that shines
Perpetual, for You do support us all the day long.

In mercy we wait, we pray, we believe Holy Ghost:
Mary was a lovely girl, devout and promising woman of sorrows
And joys.

Pentecost, how the Spirit did lead her to obedience
By invitation of an angel of God. Mystical Holy Ghost.

What Spirit is this that leads her to the glorious company of apostles
we pray in glory everlasting for all souls bask in that light,
Renewing even the spirit of our minds, the Prayer book says.

Mary was a lovely girl, serene, so we turn to her life of joyful service—
Pentecost. In the heavens and on earth, just a phrase that speaks
Of memory where lives eternal lives the wonderfully created renewed
dignity of human nature.



Is this not a cross? The Dead, gone. Remembered this November
Season of reflection and changing season. Follow Him.

Mary was a lovely girl,
and in her joy she has done so, follow him,
now in the company of all the Saints and Apostles.



Morning before Winter: Awakening with dawn



This is another day of creation.
Birds are awake, sunrise comes.

Walkers are already out taking their morning stretch.
Checking the morning sounds.
Knowing the week is awakening and the day is here.

This is the day the Lord has made, let us be glad in it.
First prayer of praise and thanksgiving begins in looking forward
saying good morning.

Act of recollection begins.
Catch fish of the mind.



Winter

Winter

1.	What darkness . . .	55
2.	January 25, 2010.....	56
3.	Seeker & Doubter	57
4.	Early morning.....	58
5.	Natural places with sacred quality	59
6.	Harmony of seasons turning towards Spring in February.....	60
7.	The Awakening Spirit . . .	61
8.	Sleep, known and unknown petitions	62
9.	“Advent”	63
10.	“Advent Candle”	64
11.	Christmas as poem.....	65
12.	Visions of God’s presence	66

What darkness . . .*8*

What is, enter into
the darkness place;
what blackness ahead.
Light torches, flames
bright. Across the water
there is light—we know.

B'

*Winter***January 25, 2010***S*

I have waited on the Lord,
In the stillness of my mind.
In the music of a hymn,
In a conversation with a friend.

It is in the loveliness of a flower,
And the color of the light of day
Lost in a prayer from the prayer book,
I have waited on the Lord.

My friend, it is the pleasure of life,
The knowledge in simplicity of knowing
One another, and even the times that come looming
To the psyche of trials and fears in a tunnel
Where confinement of spirit and mind

Make the soul weep and wonder
That there is comfort in knowing you
Lord. Speak to my heart.

B

Seeker & Doubter



Water springs
from pools deeply
hidden, refreshing
mortal companionship
with divine
simplicity.

Born, lived under,
died to be given
by the hand of God
a suspenseful dedication
in voice heard with promise:
they will never perish
sweet allowance, forgiveness
immortal. Wondering
may we live in within
your presence, Spirit come.



*Winter***Early morning***8*

Startling reminder, ray point of light (star):
come winter daytime,
bring early morning to awaken anew before
dawn, with life to arise.

Stretch pearl luster
and harken with children,
young parents, neighbors,
and babies unborn asleep,
resting in the womb
to come forth beginning.

The new day has intentions.
You Holy Spirit stir me,
health and hopefulness restore.

B'

Natural places with sacred quality



Winter sunlight brightens
 the path further along;
 seek peace, sun warmer—approach
 the small bridge, to cross
 the creek in knowledge
 this is the way where He
 is with us. Midmorning walk
 revealing the white light;
 God wrestles the pilgrim
 with angels witness to yes.
 Wooden bridge, path, people
 and the sound of love: gift.
 The voices of strangers speaking,
 listen to the sound of rising
 envelopment, subtle sense
 the awake to mercy in the world.
 What sound is this we hear, what light
 is this we see? What company awakens us?
 Witness, after Christmas celebrations,
 these twelve days. Sojourning walk:
 seek a homeland. Life, there/here is abundance.
 During the way, again I am man,
 creature part of creation beauty
 that You can in Godhead are. Reminder
 of starry night brought indoors,
 night last come to us soothing
 dreams of this friendly good earth.
 Perfect man, perfect God walk with us.



Harmony of seasons turning towards Spring in February



The February rains come down,
light weight upon the land
bringing sparkle, refreshment
needed this season. The clarity
in the air juxtaposes against
the turn of season towards Spring
as the feelings and signs awaken
the sleeper in me, saying arise.

Yield I must to the rhythm of earth,
desiring an open heart to mercy
for others. This rain refreshes
and aids the call to live; be
swift my mind and intellect, gain
the harmony of good weather, a gift
for us this returning and renewal.



The Awakening Spirit . . .



The vision on awakening
during morning time, blue sky
white flower sky
painting tree

with creation reality.
This great experience
of the spirit;

the new life of incarnate God—the Christ.
“I in them and they in me,
that they may be perfectly one.”

Advent days; come Lord.
Winter light hours beckon.
The poinsettias’ red leaves.



Sleep, known and unknown petitions

Sleep, invited each night with anticipation.
 Lull during the hours to instill a deeper
 sometimes,

punctuated with early times of prayer,
 for refreshment. Often awakened through force,
 intruded by darkness, an intensely desired need

after the setting sun—to avoid. May the dark night
 of the soul pass, let the how desired is sleep, yes,
 enter to gain marking rhythms as gathering
 dreams in continuity with friends in known
 and unknown petitions. Sleep,
 an entryway to eternity:

as practical rest in this life revealed.
 Come and chant the early night
 to know the release recollection of life
 may grant, then rest

more the often as sleep comforts mind
 with balm we call to soothe.
 Sleep, time to practice saying and knowing
 in deep memory, down beyond conscious awake
 among primal places being primitive and entered.

Rest; come to me to allow the self
 to rest in thee.



“Advent”



Grace:
Yielding To God.

Quiet:
Waiting In the season.

Christ is coming,
Born this year.



*Winter***“Advent Candle”***A*

Lit a candle.
My heart is beginning,
My heart is hopeful,
My heart is open.

It is in the season,
A coming, something.
A coming, remarkable.
A coming, promise.
It is the light in the day.

B

Christmas as poem



I hope you like poems about babies,
new, and birth and stars that bend their voices.
My answer to your perplexity is this:
Fall/Winter gratitude. Thankfulness for the blessing of a healthy birth,
and in this recitation of a lesson (which is what this poem represents)
also a merry carol
a series of phrases from two hymns for Christmas.
“ . . . let every heart prepare him room, and heaven and nature sing . . . ”
“and every stone shall cry.—And every stone shall cry;”
“To pave his kingdom come.—”
“By whose descent among us the worlds are reconciled.”

Oh, but you are mine and
I ask to be in you and you in me.
What gifts you bear so that we may bear
gifts to you, my soul is thankful. With praise.

I offer this poem much with an apology
for I did, too,
want to construct part of the mystery of the event
that is so moving and in its truth ancient and
worthy to be brought to this Millennium of 2000 for a New Year.

So it is here as I constructed it more than three years ago,
with thanks for your attention and forbearance
to see these words that are a love of affection in the entry of
justice that is given by God in Triune splendor
—of a love that is desire and the beat of a heart in man and woman.



Visions of God's presence



Prose poem written Christmas 1999
An Interlude, an Invitation to Further Reflection.

THIS IS A JOURNAL IN POETIC FORM OF THE PASSION BIRTH
AS PAGEANT
DISPLAYED IN WRITING ON THE SKY BY THE HORIZON.
EARLY LIGHT JUST BEGUN.
AWAKEN SLEEPER. PLEASE DO, DO THE INVITATION
SPEAKS.

Some notes of Advent through Epiphany, with the Star in the South ever
bright before dawn.

On a journey, and in search of the living God in Christ.
To ascend.

Seeking the Glory of God revealed in the morning as
a vigil and journal in Chronicle of light where the
hidden sight of the Almighty is passing by with celestial ever-present
burning bright pleasure in Grace.

This is the American scene, here in the West
above the waters. The clouds above and yet this violet
and purple so immense as to bring fear, and an awe.
“My ways are not your ways.”

He is not in the lightning. Look not there, but transfixed
this is an imminence of recording the daily sight of the
season as the rising sun, oh glorious is the dawn.

This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us be glad in it. So the words
are spoken.

December 14: Before dawn prayed to the appearance of the Lord as
the Glory of God was revealed. The sun to the East on the San Rafael
Richmond Bridge
enlisting the early light of the coming Christmas.

December 15: Lovely ride—Sunrise to the City of Hills started before the light brought the glory of God in majesty to the eyes. How stratospherically sublime is this vista a full Bay and its islands encompassed by bridge passageways.

December 20: Caroling Sunday—morning rose early as the eastern sun brought the illumination to the interior as a Christmas blessing. The Glory of God was evident in the a.m. before light, as a star appeared above where below a searcher in his travels danced a morning cry of supplication to the dawn.

December 23: We saw a vast purple range of majesty on entering the environs. A bird migrating North with other shapely winged angels in travel. The light was not too bright. Thank you.

December 27: There was a purple sky like a great beauty of color across the sky hiding from me the presence of the Lord. We passed a container ship on the ferry. The picture of it included a sun coming up behind the ship with the San Francisco Oakland Bridge, edifice of strength and human imagination of industry and the postmodern reminder. Christmas is here. Today is St. Stephen's Day.

December 28: A golden reflection appeared in the buildings in the distance across the waters. The sun rose brilliant yellow orange and the in-dwelling mystery of Christ was apparent at the beginning of the journey. A purple early morning light of sky was a comfort to the eye and shoreline we approached. This was a holiday pilgrimage of peace this morning. December 29: The sense of the impending year of the Lord is close as I and others prepare for 72 hours of peace. How Christ and a year of Jubilee is so, what is essential in search for faith? We are tried as is gold in a furnace. The morning rose so grandly on the way, like a promise in good tidings as angels accompany us into this new millennium. By God's grace, I pray.

December 30: The early morning light was a purple joy of blanket over the eastern horizon as are resurrection and so the birth of Christ. This is the 6th day, and there is a cross in the horizon that tells of our mortality and redemption. Lyric.

January 3, 2000: The clarity of the morning before dawn was illuminated by early morning travelers. What gifts have we to offer, as the light shines. That star in the southern sky remains this morning.

Oh

B'

Spring

Spring

1.	Holding the moments of creation's good.....	71
2.	The journey of communion	72
3.	Ash Wednesday	74
4.	Unfolding in the silence and sound	75
5.	Compilation (for Lent).....	76
6.	Engaged in Le Milieu Divin, Lent.....	77
7.	I Visited the Veteran's Hospital Today, Oh Boy	78
8.	Ascension Day, No. 1	80
9.	The winds of youth in Spring, they call	81
10.	Notes from the study house in March, No. 3.....	82
11.	In the flame of the candle unknowable vastness.....	83
12.	Conversation with Aged	85
13.	Simple joys . . . frail years.....	87
14.	Pentecost Sunday Prayer.....	88
15.	To know something about God	89
16.	Poetics On Easter	90
17.	Alleluia!! Easter!!.....	93

Holding the moments of creation's good



The season has changed
coming to this small town
in the west, California.

In silhouette,
a sleeping Indian princess lies
across the mountain named Tamalpais.
Buds show;

Spring has come, colors
awaken. Our bodies awake
with the pleasantry of aroused
knowledge this earth is good.

Ancient elements of mankind
beckon from the blood and sinews,
a memory that this was a promise
of earth, receiving us with splendor.

In the distance, among hills,
fog rolls over the tops,
and for a while in this world
of strife and evils of war
there is the knowledge
creation is with us, good.





The journey of communion . . .



Is it fair
for Church to be so sorrowful?
And joyful, too, the same at one.

We sang Hymn 204,
“Love is come again
like wheat that springeth green.”
Sweetness and joy meet.
We share our lives, their fabric

weaves us in God.
Is this an adventure, I yearn
for love—died.

“Now the green blade riseth . . .”
We are bound together
in our mortality.
My soul.

The sharing of bread and wine
began earlier in the day and went
on in journey.

In our awakening to the Sunday
when in sunlight the shadow
of myself appeared on a tree
from my deck.

I knew I am
this day to take communion so said
“O ye works of the Lord,
bless ye the Lord.”

After communion I sing
“love lives again”
minutes previous wondered, thought and prayed
on my knees.
We must begin again.

B'

*Spring***Ash Wednesday***A*

Cold weather here, California.
Ash Wednesday is coming,
the Groundhog failed to show.
The portents say more winter,
and so in the cold days—
with their rain—I will go
to be marked as Christ's.

This pilgrimage has begun
for me, before the Tuesday
before the Wednesday. Look
and I do for season by season
I follow the poor, chaste Christ.

B

Unfolding in the silence and sound . . .



Came to Lent
this season
with fear of the Lord
and weakness. Asked of Christ,
that the moon will not strike
at night, nor when lost among
strangers cause me adversity of pain.

I am Yours,
You are mine. Abide
in Me.

Exercises:
Making room for silence,
the sound of life;
listening as penance
these weeks. Long time.

Intimate moments in people's talk, their voices
about Triune God mystery
mark the weeks. Barren depths
of sin reveal themselves.
This is unfolding.



Compilation (for Lent)

My confession is lifted up, and my mind is aware
that I am before God and man
seeking forgiveness—

The Lord be in your heart and upon your lips . . .

Do you notice the first thing said:
by his great mercy forgive you all your offenses . . .

For the failures of the body, the sins of the person,
and restore you in the perfect peace of the Church . . .
One says, Have mercy on me, O God, according to your loving kindness . . .

For with my tongue I have said,
in my heart I have faulted,
with my body I have done for my corruptible flesh has brought me to
sin.
May God in his love enlighten your heart . . .

Bring me to the light; take me from the dark,
as I cannot remember all my sins,
those forgotten and out of mind.

My meditation on my evil, my sweetness of good,
these I bring to you heavy laden.

A compilation from “The Book of Common Prayer,” these words remind
one of, “The Reconciliation of a Penitent, Form Two,” found on page
449.



Engaged in Le Milieu Divin, Lent



In the habitat zone
where I know God's presence
I recognize
the outer darkness—

transfigure is the season's
introduction
to Le Milieu Divin.

Precarious habitation,
there is the greater world
where Christ is loci
even in travaux
ordinary,
extraordinary.

We are of substance
existence, created believing—
seeking. Fill my half
heartedness; unbend me.

Before my trials of devil
and insidious evil—the darkness.
You are center point even of my despair
inside me, outside entering
transformation. You are Godhead,
Trinity.

May I show penitence, everlasting
one adored? Lent begins:
Celebration.



I Visited the Veteran's Hospital Today, Oh Boy . . .

The fog sits and lives by the City
 Where men with their sketches made
 by nursing friends to strangers, linger
 on the walls and in the memories.

Anonymous lessons of Caesar campaigns,
 and American victories of elegant tours,
 in journeys from many armies
 are adorned by men with injuries tended.

This on the caverns and hallways
 punctuated by building clinic,
 hospital, Nursing Home, Ambulatory Center
 for Veterans in San Francisco by the Pacific.

Limbs, lives, bodies nurtured with
 disparate routine in diversity,
 of legions in regular staff to
 administer the chapel of balm to war injured.

Oh, boy, I saw the men today
 and the women when visiting
 the line at the Veteran's Hospital, Oh Boy.
 I heard the news today, saw the results.

Care and treatment offered:
 Tender mercies given with discipline,
 received with gratitude, politics,
 and golden hearts with purple glory
 in sketches of lines of color in living faces.
 A kind of memorial to wounded.

These, Oh, Boy, I read the news today
of American faces mingling camaraderie
in wounded attention, ministrations of,
Oh, Boy, the agony was apparent in the quiet.

The fog rolls through the Golden Gate
in the City where the houses in their
colored array sit cheek to jowl; the men
talk of Senators and Officers, wait for prosthetics.

Oh, Boy, there is God who is around
the corner, down the hall. I read
the news today in the vastness
and hub bub to display a sketch of tenderness.

B'



Ascension Day, No. 1



There is a church service of prayer—
sing.

Evening Prayer that festival day;
we came as pilgrims in an expectation
of a divine celebration. Grace.

Enter into the liturgy. Celebrate God.
This dialogue in prayer and word.
Song.

Oh, that he did rise—it was a hymn.
When the Lord rose, He Ascended.
Imagination, I was.

Inspiration.
As melodious beautiful voices,
a man ascending in this beauty.
Of the beauty.

Making the beauty, bringing with Him
the perfected human nature of this world.
This is celebration.
Divine.

God's gift.
Man as a being of humanity.
God's gift of celebration.
Humanity.

Man and the divine.
Mystery.
This is the Christ.



The winds of youth in Spring, they call . . .



Many times my youth
comes to me, like a breeze
stirring the landscape,
and all that's in it, reminding me
that my companionship

with other living things
is renewed by growing.
Birth is an exclamation
surprise, and my springs
of blood in marrow of bone

are enlisted with birth's
great divine entry
to this world. We adore
the strength of youth,

calling to it in unknowing
conversations that continue
as part of daily life.

Fresh stirrings and wonderment.
This touch of exclamation
is the wind caressing
the spring day, awakens

the years even during
the aches of moments;
so alluring and enjoyable,
this renewing youth.
Carried into older age.



Spring

Notes from the study house in March, No. 3

A

In God of God,
beginning with the mnemonic—with Christ
beside others.
Around the Abba. The Alpha.

Tree of the Cross,
giving voice to yearning
within. The returning
movement
of intention to be
with God the whole day.

The master says,
“Not to be habitually forgetful,”
prayer of aspiration!
Help me in this God.

B

In the flame of the candle unknowable vastness



God's presence arrives,
listening to the lighted
candle. The flame
communicates the aware
devotion of silence, making
things seen and unseen
prayerful notices. These conversations

continue reverently in the room
where we were on vigil Easter
time. Those prayers remain still. How soothing it is to listen
to prayer; the Yes, be awake in spirit
and mind
as during the engagement with God
there is room for the fiery envelopment
elicited within and enjoined
to others in a rising embrace
by unknowable vastness. Given

a moment to be aware
of God's presence.

Receive the season
that astounds, despite slowness
of heart. Say "Stay with us . . ."

Spring

At the back of the Church,
 at the foot of the Cross in the Cathedral,
 by the sacrament in private on the mountain,
 in the chapel at noon time,
 on the road,
 in the light of day,
 during work, how it is to recall
 the spirit.

Times eternal unending. Here remember:

Others know, too.

When she goes to pray, an intimate
 time of life, we know love
 embraces us as love embraces her. On Sunday, first the flame
 listens
 best; later all week the heart be open, love invites
 on the road. Feed us, You do
 in the breaking of bread.
 Take the cup. A moment and minutes that love offers,
 this is the sweet enduring spirit.
 Continue the ongoing conversation.

B'

Conversation with Aged



I recite a long Psalm,
119,
beginning as a confession
but lending my thoughts
and opening my heart.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of your statutes,
And I shall keep it to the end

Give me understanding, and I shall keep your law;
I shall keep it with all my heart.

Be gentle to memory: of failure
to seek God, and desire good
creates a long list of weakness
and mindless concerns that ignore
God for so many years.

Let your loving-kindness come to me, O Lord,
And your salvation, according to your promise.

Old ones I talk with as I read, speak
of their youth, and I think
“Is this what is on their minds?”
So I soothe and open my heart
to let in healing to younger times
in my life. Even to childhood.

Happy are they whose way is blameless,
Who walk in the law of the Lord!

Spring

Happy are they who observe his decrees
And seek him with all their hearts!

I say words for them, these old people, and
for others:
in thought before words,
in mind before thought,
present in the heart, and I listen,
always desiring to hear.
This talk with old people
leads me to gentleness with myself.
This is their message.

They say to me, "I am living
so long. I hardly think about it."

I continue my reading
Psalm 119.

I am a stranger here on earth;
Do not hide your commandments from me.

Let my cry come before you, O Lord,
Give me understanding, according to your word.

B'

Simple joys . . . frail years

Old age is 90—
her eyesight dimming,
we visit the ducks
with ducklings and she
shows the sharpened insight
of age, looking towards
practical things like
feeding them.

That will make them come
see us. They will visit.
Simple joys.

Motion
in the water's stream.

The young lives of the birds are refreshing, a drink of coolness in Spring.

We two are learning
friendship; company
and humankind's frail
years are visited upon
us.





Pentecost Sunday Prayer



For I am empty and forlorn,
so I hope and pray.
Tongues of language and flames.

Lord.
I search; let me
welcome the Holy Spirit.
The God who brought
us out of Egypt to freedom;

let God do this emancipation:
accept and welcome,
and let us receive the Spirit.

Reach out, lift the heart,
have faith that the Spiritfire
comes settling in, penetrating us:
Goodness.

Tongues of language and flames.
Dance in our hearts.
Let it be me in Church,
let it be me, let it be others.
Come Holy Spirit. Consuming fire;
burning yes.



To know something about God . . .



With apologies to the hymn of the Syriac Church

So much grief to learn
Christ died and descended
into hell.

The vigil of Saturday
goes on. Imagination and
faith follows the journey.
He is alone in the tomb,
cold to touch.

Yet He continues.
May we with him.

He showed us God,
when he heard them cry,
“Take pity on us.”

Death held no hold
on Him.
He traced his name
on their heads,
those in darkness and fetters.

They belong to Him.
He hears their voices.

Deliverer, we say Alleluia!





Poetics On Easter



Lilies At The Front Of
The Church

When I ask someone
why do you go to Church,
they say,
“To see them light candles,”
or
“Go forward during the hymn,
for the music,”
or
“Easter lilies.”

These white flowers, delicate,
adorn the front of the
Church where we will go
for communion,
stepping among lovely
waiting ones present
and gone
also in the promise
of resurrection.

We gather: For the blood
and body broken in bread
by the celebrant,
a good man, devout.

My Aunt is 80 and
more; she likes a
gift of lilies given this
time of year.

The Minister is a comfort.
Thank you for bringing
Easter with us in
blood and body.
Dr. Brown is old,
she comes every week.
The blind woman
knows Christ's promise,
and wants company.

Secret, mystical things happen.
Yes. Say yes. I do.

I went for the candle lighting,
and wanted to hear bells ring.
I looked at parents,
shared their companionship
with their children,
and saw the aged;
spectacle of harmony
and energy. I know
some come to sit
in quiet moments.

A man lights a candle
for his wife, gone.
This other Sundays.
But more than this
touches us—
as God is among us.

The swirling morning
colors through windows
bring hallowed
light; it does enlarge
and bring us together
enlisting life to
dry bones. Easter.

Spring

Many pray and know
their Bible. Easter
brings people together
in promises that are
unknown; these
secret hearts,
sacred minutes,
oh, mystery.

In Earth time
we see the lilies gathered,
and they are for us.
Heavenward.

The tomb is empty.

B'

Alleluia!! Easter!!

At the intersection of Easter
we wait with thoughts of new life,
the life of a baby, the life of the Baptized,
the life of the lamb, and the memory of slaughter,
of the death is fresh, but forgotten for the time
we say, He is risen! He is risen indeed!!

Those bones, those bones, those dry bones
are linked, renewed, given flesh, given life.
More than renewal, like freshness, like birth . . .
Out of the tomb, white as lightning, transfigured . . .
we are mystified, believers, quiet in surprise,
wondering at the miracle and hearing how the Apostles
told their friends the tomb is empty.

He is risen! He is risen indeed!!
The mind cannot fathom God's working, the promise;
we go on with the tale, this myth, and this story
this reality after vigil, after waiting, knowing the end
does not come, for from generation to generation the day
is celebrated, as from everlasting to everlasting there is Christ.

Shall we say it the third time, Lord have mercy. Christ have mercy,
Lord have mercy. He is risen! He is risen indeed!!

Alleluia!

Freely is the offer made, freely we take the body and blood,
. . . we bless you in this freeform of sentences, for our creation,
preservation . . . above all for your immeasurable love in the redemption
of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; we share in his victory over death.

